

# Interview with Devika

## The Buddha Disease

### Darshan Diary

### January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1977.

*Joan, the elderly mother of Devesh, an English sannyasin, arrived in Poona a few days ago.*

*Coming from a background of English upper-class, Joan has none of the reserve that might be expected of one of her age and background.. A warm, easy-going woman, she immediately fell in love with Osho and the ashram, alarming even Devesh at the extent of her enthusiasm when she pondered aloud within days of being here, 'But what would I do with my dogs here?'*

**She became Ma Anand Devika on January the second 1977.**

*In conversation with Maneesha some weeks later, Devika said that she had become interested in Osho and wanted to come to Poona, largely because of her son, Devesh, in whom she had seen many changes since he became a sannyasin .. ..*

**Devika:** I'm sure It's made a tremendous difference to him, so I feel unbelievably grateful. Really, it's made a great difference for me to see him. I think he's pleased I came, I think he's pleased I took sannyas.

*Osho reinforced Devika's suggestion that she did it the hypnotherapy group. It was the first group she had done and she felt she gained much from it .. ..*

**Devika:** I didn't altogether succeeding in relaxing as deeply as I might have—and Santosh (the leader) was aware of that. I told him so and I wept with him about it. I think that it was just that after 60 years of not doing that sort of thing .. ..and it

takes a bit of time. Perhaps I'm not the hypnosis type, but I gained a lot from it, and the friendship of the group. They were lovely and we had great fun together.

And there was I—an old lady as they would say—having all these jokes and showers in showers (the showering facilities for groups are communal). I hadn't realised that it would be like that, and thank goodness nobody told me, because I'd have chickened out! And that would have been absurd because nothing could have been more friendly and easy and delightful. I loved it really. We had lots of fun and they were so nice. Of course he was terribly good—Santosh .. ..A really wonderful character.

**Maneesh:** Did you feel more involved or more related to sannyasins as a whole after the experience of the group?

**Devika:** Yes, I did. That's why I really rather wanted to do it because I felt that .. ..Osho said in one of his discourses once, 'When you're a sannyasin, don't be hiding behind your orange.' And I felt I was hiding behind my orange .. ..and my ego is *colossal*! (laughing) I suppose it takes a bit of time.

It pops up all the time, and when I'm supposed to be meditating, all sorts of extraordinary things come popping in—ego, ego, ego! But it dies eventually perhaps, if one is here longer.

I must say, I really love it here. The atmosphere at the ashram is simply marvellous I think—the sort of friendliness of people and yet the ease; they don't bother you.

You can be free to say nothing all day if you want, or you can be free to talk and laugh with people, and eat with them. It's lovely, I think. And different people—every nationality, age, every class, every type, every, everything, isn't it! Old and young .. ..

**Maneesh:** Were you surprised to see the sort of people who come here?

**Devika:** Well yes, I think I was, really. I thought it would be more

chaotic because I had only seen photographs before, that Devesh brought home. I think a lot of them were taken at Osho's birthday, and of course that's glorious chaos, isn't it? But all I saw was masses of orange in these photographs, and I thought, 'Good heavens! I shall be knocked down!'—because I'm always knocked down in the crowds if I'm not careful, because of my legs .. ..can't stand steadily. But not a bit!

I think that there are such marvellous people. When you think of all they've given up, Maneesha, to come! All their lives .. ..their work, their families, their backgrounds .. ..quite contentedly. So it's very impressive isn't it? Very. And with no regrets as far as I can see.

I've talked to many of them—I've made many friends .. ..Many friends of all ages. I've got a charming little Italian lady. She doesn't speak English so she said did I parlay a little Francais, and so I said I did so off we went in French! She's simply sweet.. ..she's a darling.

There's simply everyone, and so many friends all ages, so one never feels lonely. If you want to be alone, you can be. As soon as you come into the ashram, you feel, 'Here we are everybody!' and we go dashing here and there in our little rickshaws! (Laughing)

**Maneesha:** See you really feel a sense of family?

**Devika:** Oh, distinctly .. ..I really do—without an awful heaviness. There's none of this possessiveness that you get in a family—'Why are you doing this? Where were you yesterday? What were you doing?'—that sometimes families do, expecting to know.

Nobody expects anything. You just to meet in the here-and-now as Osho would say, don't you?

And of course, I love here-and-now. I've always been a bit of a here-and-nower—which I wasn't sure wasn't rather flippant. I hate delving over the past. I think about it of course and the people who are not here any more, but I don't go on regretting, and I don't bother too much about the future.

The odd few plans you have to make, I make, but I love just today .. ..love just going out and playing with my dogs and just looking at the scenery. The happiest days I have are when I go out in the fields in my farm in Yorkshire with the animals, with the dogs, and just look. It's beautiful. A sort of nothingness, and yet full of everything. Lovely

**Maneesha:** Did you expect any cultural shock on coming to India?

**Devika:** No, not really, because I had expected it. But of course when you see it its more vivid isn't it? Coming from Bombay, all those people .. ..what impressed me for a long time was all those extraordinary shacks all the way along the road from the airport to the town. Thing about it was that although the shacks looked terrible, the people looked so happy and so well! Lovely little children coming out-beautiful and so well-and chickens and the dogs-all of which fascinates me. Then every so often an exquisite goddess would arrive in a sari-just gliding out in that marvellous way they do-looking as if she had come out of the Taj Mahal or something! They looked so perfectly contented-doing their business altogether with the animals and their children.

I'm down in the old hotel now in the old part of Poona. You see the bullock-carts going by and screeching rickshaws and the funny little cabiny shops where they lookout.

**Maneesha:** Can you describe a little of your own background?

**Devika:** I was brought up Church of England-and I always have been Intrigued by various religions, but I haven't studied them. I've done Christian science-went to a service in London, and that was rather intriguing. I've been to a lot of Roman Catholic services in Rome, Portugal and in France. And of course one loves in a way, the spectacle-its dramatic and glorious.

About myself .. ..I think I have at intervals thought,' Why am I here? Why in this period, am I here-why didn't I get born earlier?' I've thought,' How funny that I should be here now.'

Sometimes I think,' Who am I really' because you see, naturally



one does all sorts of things. The people one works with think if you solely and completely as what you are to them, and don't think about you having another life.

*Devika went on to say that she was on various committees .. ..*

**Devika:** And then in politics too, of course-Osho would be horrified, I'm sure-but I was an organiser in politics and chairman and things like that. But oddly enough, I'm not so keen on those things now. They seem to be drifting away from me.

But I enjoyed it .. .. I enjoyed the people I worked with and I enjoyed the excitement and the interest very much. I think they're not the fiends that Osho thinks they are, but I understand what he means, because obviously when you're in the thing-if you're a politician, a real politician-you want to get to the top, because it's interesting to see and know more, isn't it? I see his point about power, and of course he doesn't mean it entirely for everybody-he means those who are seeking power, and he's right- and a lot of them see nothing but power, and I don't like them.

**Maneesha:** Had you been interested in Gurdjieff or Sufism at all, or anything like that?

**Devika:** No, I hadn't .. ..absolutely not. Couldn't be more ignorant about it. I read Osho's books of course, because Devesh let me have them.

**Maneesha:** What were your feelings on first reading Osho's books?

**Devika:** Well, I was impressed. First of all I read 'The Mustard Seed'. There was a great deal of repetition in it, I thought, one felt that he was repeating because he wanted to impress the words on one, you see. Also I felt that if I'd heard him-heard his voice and the way I see him move now-his hands and his expressions and the whole personality coming out .. ..It's totally different when you see it flat on the page isn't it?

Suddenly you think, 'Heavens, I've heard this before!' A perfect shaft of brilliance and truth comes. I've marked several pages in

The Mustered Seed' and I thought it was quite outstanding and marvellous.

Now since I've been here, I'm reading,' Come Follow Me'. I like 'Come Follow Me' best. Somehow to me, it's more beautiful—it's more utterly true and lovely

**Maneesha:** Did you find that Osho speaking on Jesus made Jesus more a reality to you?

**Devika:** Well, he's always been a reality to me, but Osho has made him more so, because he treats him as a man, and he treats him more as a prophet than something tremendously different, doesn't he, really?.. ..Very much as a man, but equally as a divine man. Yes, I've always been really moved by Jesus and his story.. ..very much so.

**Maneesha:** Did you see Osho first at a lecture or Darshan?

**Devika:** It was at a lecture—a Hindi lecture, just after I arrived. I was sitting at the side because they allowed me to have a chair. So I saw him come in—he looked marvellous—and he sat down.

I saw him in profile, and of course I think that was lovely because you can see the way he turns his head, and his voice. The fact that it was in Hindi didn't matter a bit because it flowed on, and you could see how it was going from the faces of sannyasins. They'd laugh and they'd weep and they'd be serious, and you just knew what was happening. It was a beautiful sight, I thought—in that great hall with all the different oranges, and the trees outside and the birds and those awful squawky trains! there (Laughing)

But no, I was most impressed by him. I thought he was absolutely marvellous—more so than I could really picture before. You see, he's a wonderful looking man, for one thing. He's got tremendous charisma. Even if he was a wicked sinner, he's frightfully attractive, isn't it? And one can get completely overwhelmed by him. As a good man, he's even more so!

Then I went to my first Darshan, collapsed on the floor in front

of him, and just gazed up into his wonderful face. He's so absolutely warm and welcoming, isn't he? He sort of drew me towards him in that beautiful way he does.

Then I took sannyas, and I was rather nervous about getting up and down because I'm terribly clumsy, you see. But I managed, and it didn't really matter. And Osho understands. It doesn't really matter what you do.

**Maneesh:** Was there any dilemma feel about taking sannyas?

**Devika:** Not really at all. I really always secretly meant to, I think. I knew I would before I came out. I thought I probably would because I thought I'd disappoint Devesh if I didn't come and I didn't want to disappoint Devesh because I'm very fond of him—he's a darling boy. I thought if I refused it would make a sort of disappointment and a slight block, and that it would hurt him. And then I found it was the next obvious thing to be—even without Dervish's feelings. I felt it was right, and I wouldn't have liked not too. I'd hate to be on the edge of it now.

**Maneesh:** Have you felt any different since you've been a sannyasin?

**Devika:** Yes, I think I do really. I feel more repose than I felt, and I feel more steady in myself, and the fact that one knows now what Osho says —that you are centered eventually, and that that's the thing in life to consider: whether it's from your own centre—and I think I am. I think it has impressed me with the truth of life, so I'm hoping to improve on that.

**Maneesh:** Can you talk a little more about what Osho means to you?

**Devika:** Well, I love him really, but I'm rather frightened of him because he's so big and truthful, and I feel rather small and petty. You see what I mean?—Because one is nowhere near his stature or his marvellous love, compassion, wisdom, everything. How could one be? So I am rather frightened of him.

I felt if I could sit beside him like I'm sitting with you now, for

ten minutes, twenty minutes, forty minutes .. ..a year I'd love it! I am always feeling at Darshan you mustn't take up his time, and you must go soon, and it's all over quickly and there's lots of people there. I'd like to just sit down and talk to him .. ..because he's a wonderful person.

He's got this marvellous instant response, hasn't he? I was so impressed by him when I got back to my place and watched him with the others. He was *perfect* with me, and then with the next person in front of him—it might have been a sannyasin or might not have been—his expression would totally change. He'd look at them and he'd be with them—and he— he'd be with them at once. He'd be right into them, wouldn't he? What ever the problem was, he was absolutely into it and discussing it with them. You'd probably find afterwards that it was just some boring little detail about their lives, but he was absolutely into it and understanding so marvellously. That's what I found perfectly marvellous .. ..that impressed me tremendously.

It's a great experience to have come in contact—even as little as I have—with a man of that sort, because they're very, very rare aren't they? And yet although he's rare, he's so understanding of ordinary life and he jokes about ordinary things. He's not one of those people who sit on top of the Himalayas and is remote.

**Maneesha:** I was about to ask you before, if he'd made religion, spirituality, or whatever more a part of your everyday life.

**Devika:** I think he has .. ..he certainly has. He makes It all .. ..and the fact that God is with us all the time if we choose to listen to him. He makes It all so real—and that's what I thought is wonderful.

*Devika went on to talk about preacher she had known in England whom she had found somewhat akin to Osho in that he had an inspiring personality, loved to joke about the organised church, and was considered to be something of a rebel.*

**Maneesha:** So you see Osho as a bit of a rebel?



**Devika:** Oh of course, he's a gorgeous rebel isn't he? And he's a splendid rebel! And yet in such a nice way-because he's not a destructive rebel. He's a rebel who sees what we need destroying, and he's building to. I think he's a marvellous rebel.

I love his wit and humour and his jokiness, because never gets pompous or highky- tikey, does he? Never .. ..absolutely never. Always right down-to-earth.

And he's wonderful about love and sex and everything-he describes it all so naturally.' orgaaasm (with Osho's pronunciation) and all those sort of things .. ..and everything so 'wast'! (laughter)

I love his voice and the words he uses. The fact that he sometimes mispronounces English words makes them much more potent and you think about the words more .. ..'Like' irrelevant'. How does he say it-'ir-ray-lay-vant'or something? You see, he makes you think about it. I find it more beautiful and more lively. He brings so much life into it all. I think he puts life into all of us.

I feel I have these tremendous blood transfusions daily! I think it's a great experience.

**Maneesha:** Do you feel that what he's initiating is going to reach to the far corners of the earth?

**Devika:** I think it is .. ..I mean, it really has already started in its way, hasn't it? And the fact that it's here, is in a way, more impressive, I think, than if it were in Leicester or some boring place like that, because for one thing, you're not pestered by the press, and that makes it commonplace. And then, he seems in the right place himself. He looks right and he speaks Hindi and its right for him to be here and for us to come to him.

I think it will spread because in the west now there's a tremendous feeling among people that their looking for something, and they don't find it. Although they say that the young are so wild, I think that when they feel religion, they feel it more intensely and there's much more .. ..people talk about it more.

In the old days people used to go to church and then go home and put the books away and then never talk about it. Now people talk like anything! And I think that there is this desperate search, and many, many of them will find the answer here.

**Maneesha:** So you feel that Osho has the significance of a Jesus or a Buddha?

**Devika:** Oh, I do—I do very much. I think people should come and come and come again. They're lucky if they've seen him and heard him and read him.

I hope he's with us for many, many years. He keeps talking that way about leaving, but I do hope it's not true.

**Maneesha:** Do you imagine you'll have a sense of him when you're away?

**Devika:** Yes I do .. ..I certainly do. Because I will think about him and I rather hoped that he will have sent a spark through with a wave of his hand or something!

He's the sort of person who one could think of constantly and spend some time with within one's thoughts, isn't he?

**Maneesha:** I'm sure you'll find him down on your farm in Yorkshire when you are playing with you're dogs in the fields!

**Devika:** I'm sure I will. I've got these little Tibetan dogs, and I shall go for walks with them, think about the Orient and think about Osho and all the hills and all the trees. He thinks about trees and flowers—I relate to my trees and flowers .. ..and I think its marvellous

It's not only an emotional feeling—which of course one gets too. It's just sort of a feeling of strength and truth isn't it?

**Maneesha:** Just what is.

**Devika:** Just what is .. ..yes.

He's quite destructive on some things like planning and family life and marriage. He said something the other day about how marriage should be for the great love between two people—not only just the rush of affection and sex, but just a true companionship and two people joined together for lives living together .. ..Not that awful possessiveness—'your mine' and 'you're not to do this because you're mine'. It's bad, isn't it? I'm sure that Osho wouldn't approve of that

I must say, it's the most marvellous thing—feeling him. It's a sort of peace and yet liveliness too. He's very disturbing to one. When I say 'peace' it's peace, but it's a very disturbing kind of peace at times because he changes one's thoughts tremendously! He means to—and quite right to.

Somehow it's all beautiful. I love it .. ..I'm very happy here. And I keep staying on, the way one does. I wrote to Osho and said, 'I should go home, I know.' In lots of ways I want to go home, but I simply cannot get away!

